

## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF THE WORLD. VOLUME 1: OSTRICH TO DUCKS. By Josep del Hoyo, Andrew Elliott, and Jordi Sargatal (eds.). Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain. 1992:696 pp., numerous color photographs, maps, and illustrations. \$165.00.—The present volume is the first of a series that review the birds of the world in a progressive, phylogenetic fashion. After an introduction describing the general organization and purpose of the work, the book discusses the general anatomy, natural history, evolution, and taxonomy of the Class Aves. The remainder of the book is divided into sections progressively dealing with orders of birds from ostriches through ducks, geese, and swans. The discussion of each order begins with a general review of the group. Each section ends with a review of the species in the order, providing detailed taxonomy, a map of each species' distribution, and numerous references to the scientific literature dealing with that species. Final sections include references to the original scientific descriptions of each species and a fairly lengthy list of references.

This book is large in size, scope, and price, but in my view all are justified. The book should contribute to the education of persons interested in birds, but who do not possess an extensive library dealing with avian biology, taxonomy, and distribution. I applaud the combination of readable prose, extensive use of the scientific literature and beautiful, high-quality illustrative materials. The result is a very attractive volume. The text does not appear to be directed to the casual reader or the professional, but may reach an audience that often is ignored—the scholarly nonprofessional.

The book could have benefitted from some close editing. There are numerous variations of format, style, and English usage that detract somewhat from the overall appearance of the volume. An errata sheet has been issued with "sticky" corrections that may be detached and inserted into the book. My copy of the book had a few poorly printed pages on which it appeared that the press was not fully inked.

In summary, this book may well be a useful adornment to our coffee tables or may provide useful summaries of birds with which we are not familiar, but it will not replace good field guides, checklists, and more scientific texts.—C. R. BLEM.

AVIAN SYSTEMATICS AND TAXONOMY. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club Centenary Volume*, Supplement 112A:1–309, The British Ornithologists' Club, Henry Ling Ltd., Dorset Press, Dorchester, Dorset. Price not given—In his interesting chapter on estimating the direction and strength of natural selection, Peter Grant noted that modern systematic biology has been revitalized by molecular techniques and phylogenetic (cladistic) analysis. Therefore, to judge the significance of this book, the simple task is to assess whether it exemplifies or showcases these new trends in systematics. The simple answer is no. This book is mostly about where avian systematics has been and not about recent work or future directions. I would hope that this book is not presented to students considering research in avian systematics as a cutting edge exposé, as it poorly represents the field.

One of the high points of this book is Barrowclough's chapter. A variety of molecular techniques is available in systematics, each suited to different types of problems, or levels of taxonomic resolution. Barrowclough estimated the time it would take to solve various problems using each of several techniques, using the clever measure of "Ph.D. equivalents," that is, how many Ph.D. dissertation projects it would take to solve a given question using